

# Operation Allied Against Meth: Omnibus Legislation

In 2005, Attorney General Rob McKenna announced "Operation: Allied Against Meth," his plan to fight methamphetamine abuse in Washington. The plan had three main components:

- Hire additional attorneys to help local prosecutors with complex drug felony cases
- Partner with local community meth action teams, school-based prevention specialists and non-profit organizations such as Project Lead-On America to deliver prevention messages to school-age children
- Form a task force to advise him on a comprehensive anti-meth legislative package.



## Operation Allied Against Meth Task Force

As appeared in The Daily News, Longview, September 19, 2003.

After the 2005 legislative session, AG McKenna convened the "Operation: Allied Against Meth" task force, comprised of representatives from federal, state and local law enforcement agencies, treatment programs, business, real estate, non-profit organizations, government and the Legislature.

The committee finished its work in 90 days and issued its final report and legislative recommendations on November 9, 2005. Based on those recommendations, Attorney General McKenna worked with legislators on the task force to introduce and pass comprehensive meth legislation this session.

## Operation: Allied Against Meth Legislation (SB 6239)

Sponsored by Senators Hargrove, Johnson, Doumit, Oke, Stevens, Esser

### Part I - Substance Abuse Reduction

- Offsets any further federal grant cuts to our state's multi-jurisdictional drug task forces with direct state funding up to \$4 million. If no further cuts are enacted, restores funding levels back to the 2004 level.
- Creates a substance abuse and mental health treatment pilot project for meth users, with state matching funds to those counties who pass the 1/10 of one cent local option sales tax as authorized by SB 5763 (2005).
- Adds 100 additional therapeutic drug and alcohol treatment placements to prisons above the January 2006 levels.
- Provides an additional \$1.575 million per year from 2007 through 2010 in drug enforcement funds to three multi-county areas for sheriff's deputies and prosecutors, spread evenly across:
  - Pacific, Wahkiakum, Grays Harbor and Lewis counties;
  - Walla Walla, Columbia, Garfield and Asotin counties; and
  - Stevens, Ferry, Pend Oreille and Lincoln counties.
- Authorizes juvenile court drug courts in the drug court statute.
- Directs DSHS to consult with faith-based organizations to discuss gaps in services for recovering addicts.
- Requires planning to increase access to existing special-needs transportation for recovering addicts.
- Orders a study on media campaigns on meth use prevention, treatment promotion and underage drinking prevention.

Washington's rural law enforcement officers are on the frontlines of a growing battle against methamphetamine and they need our help. This bill is vitally important to rescuing drug-endangered children, reducing property crimes, getting addicts into treatment and cleaning up contaminated properties.

-Rob McKenna,  
Attorney General of Washington State

## Part II - Cleanup of Contaminated Property

- To assist in protecting the public from exposure to the hazardous chemicals used in manufacturing meth, gives local health officers and authorities more tools to:
  - Inspect property believed to be contaminated.
  - Declare property unfit and prohibit its use.
  - Require independent third-party sampling to verify proper decontamination of property.
  - Evaluate property decontamination projects performed by licensed contractors to determine the adequacy of the work performed.
- Directs a study on the feasibility of providing incentives and protections to landlords to encourage them to rent to recovering addicts or those convicted of drug crimes.
- Authorizes a pilot project to show how existing legal methods and grant programs can help clean up meth-contaminated properties for public uses.

## Part III - Criminal Penalties and Procedures

The task force did not recommend a wholesale increase in baseline criminal penalties for drug offenses. Instead the legislation:

- Requires all meth-related enhancements to run consecutively to all other sentences, as opposed to concurrently.
- Requires those convicted of meth-related offenses under the Drug Offender Sentencing Act to serve at least 12 months or half of the midpoint sentence range before receiving any "good time" off.
- Orders pre-sentencing investigations prior to imposing a sentence on a defendant who has been convicted of any felony drug or sex offense where the court has determined that chemical dependency has contributed to the offense.
- Amends the vulnerable adult neglect statute to include exposure to meth manufacturing as physical neglect.
- Directs the Washington Institute for Public Policy to:
  - Review the meth laws in neighboring states and make recommendations for any additional criminal penalties necessary to prevent meth criminals from migrating to Washington.
  - Study recidivism rates for offenders who receive treatment in prison versus those who participate in community-based treatment under the Drug Offender Sentencing Alternatives and those who receive no treatment.

# Meth Fast Facts

- Washington seized 1,259 illegal meth labs in 2004, the third highest number of seizures in the country behind Iowa (1,300) and Missouri (2,700) (Bellingham Herald, 4/10/2005.)
- 98 percent of state and local law enforcement agencies in Washington describe methamphetamine availability as high or moderate in their jurisdictions (NHIDTAP, 6/2005).
- Clark, Grays Harbor, Klickitat and Lewis counties had high rates of meth use among adults as early as 1995. By 2001, rates much higher than average plagued Clallam, Clark, Cowlitz, Grays Harbor, Klickitat, Lewis, Mason, Pierce and Yakima counties. Rates increased in nearly all Washington counties (Alcohol and Drug Abuse Institute [ADAI], University of Washington, 2004).
- Meth-related deaths have increased every year, with a high of 257 reported in 2005, a 17 percent increase from the previous year (WSP).
- Children documented at Washington methamphetamine lab sites have increased each year since 2001 to 495 kids in 2004, according to the EPIC Clandestine Laboratory Seizure System. This is almost five times the number of children reported in any other state in the region (DEA, Seattle Field Office, 2005).



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